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Although the issue of de jure segregation seems to be settled, the difficulties associated with de facto separation of the races are only now emerging. The six principles proposed by the Advisory Commission on Human Relations and Community Tensions to the New York State Department of Education are presented as guides for parents and school personnel when dealing with the problems of de facto segregation.

Several policies for implementing these principles are: under "open enrollment," schools with available space are authorized to receive pupils transferred from other more crowded or otherwise less desirable units; in the "Princeton Plan" or "pairing," two schools may be combined, with all students from the first four grades placed in one school and those from the upper grades placed in the other; school zoning changes may be utilized to effect changes in the school populations; "Educational Complexes" may be established in which several elementary schools and possibly a junior high school are placed in one central location; racial balance is achieved within the separate schools in the complex.

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DE FACTO SEGREGATION: GENERAL

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Desegregating City Schools

Desegregation is no longer a legal issue. The issue now is, How shall it be accomplished with reverence and regard for all children?

John H. Fischer

"SEPARATE EDUCATIONAL FACILITIES are inherently unequal." This was the pivotal statement in the Supreme Court's 1954 *Brown* decision. Although its initial impact was felt chiefly in the South, its implications have come to exert a substantial influence upon Northern schools as well.

For all the legal maneuvering of the past decade, there never was any real question as to what the *Brown* decision meant with respect to school segregation where this had been required or authorized by law. It was precisely the unequivocal clarity of the decision that engendered the pathetically ingenious efforts to circumvent it and delay its execution. The illegality of *de jure* segregation is now established throughout the country. The last state has at long last yielded, if only symbolically, to the principle that a student's race is insufficient cause to bar him from a public school.

But if the issue of *de jure* segregation seems on its way to settlement, the difficulties associated with *de facto* separation of the races are only now being brought to light. The Court also said in the *Brown* case that public education "must be made available to all on equal terms," and the question of what constitutes genuine equality among schools is far from simple. Can two schools be called equal, for example, if a majority of parents, given a free choice, would choose one above the other?

In the minds of most Americans race and social status are closely associated. Offered two schools, one enrolling a largely Negro student body, the other a predominantly white one, few parents of either race would hesitate to assume that the "white" school is superior to the "Negro" school. This is no doubt partly due to prejudice, but it is certainly not weakened by the clear fact that throughout the United States most of the schools with wholly or largely Negro student bodies, when judged by any reasonable standard, are found to be among the poorer schools of their communities.

The explanations offered are often plausible: The buildings approximate the age of their neighborhoods; they reflect the typical conditions of depressed areas; they are overcrowded as a result of congested housing and excessive family mobility; the ablest teachers choose more promising assignments. But the clearer the explanation of the differences, the more firmly the generalization is established that, admitting some admirable exceptions, in most school districts the schools that can be identified as "Negro" schools tend to be inferior.

White and Negro parents alike recognize the situa-

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tion and react in similar ways. The Negro parent either wants to see his child's school dramatically improved or wants the child transferred to a "white" school. The white parent wants to keep his child where he is and often resists the incursion of Negro pupils, fearing the deterioration of the "white" school.

The matter would be easier to deal with if the issues could be seen more clearly, but this is difficult. To be sure, not all white children are culturally advantaged, nor do all Negro children come from deprived homes. Although intelligence tests are not infallible and IQ's do change, a slow child will not necessarily acquire an IQ of 110 merely because he attends a school where that happens to be the average. To argue that no child can learn well in an all-Negro class is as stupid and cruel as to contend that Negro youngsters are sure to ruin any white school they enter. Yet these and similar assumptions, usually unspoken, underlie many of the controversies that have plagued city schools in recent years.

Principle comes first

What, then, can be offered with any assurance in these situations as a basis for judgment by parents and policy formation by school people?

Last year the Advisory Commission on Human Relations and Community Tensions of the New York State Department of Education proposed these six principles as guides in dealing with *de facto* segregation, racial imbalance, and similar questions:

1. The common school has long been viewed as a basic social instrument in attaining our traditional American goals of equal opportunity and personal fulfillment. The presence in a single school of children from varied racial, cultural, socio-economic, and religious backgrounds is an important element in the preparation of young people for active participation in the social and political affairs of our democracy.

2. In forming school policies, every educationally sound action should be taken to assure not only passive tolerance but active acceptance of, and genuine respect for, children from every segment of the community, with particular attention given to those from minority groups that may have been the objects of discriminatory treatment.

3. No action, direct or indirect, overt or covert, should be taken by any public agency to exclude any child or group of children from a public school because of ethnic, racial, religious, or other educationally irrelevant reasons. Wherever such action has occurred it is the obligation of the school authorities to correct it as quickly as possible.

4. No action should be taken which implies that any school or any group of pupils is socially inferior or superior to another, or which suggests that schoolmates of one group are to be preferred to schoolmates of another. In establishing school attendance areas, one of the objectives should be to create in each school a student body that will represent as nearly as possible a cross section of the population of the entire school district. At the same time due consideration should be given to other important educational criteria, including such practical matters as the distance children must travel from home to school.

5. A "neighborhood school" offers important educational values that should not be overlooked. The relation between a school and a definable community with which it is identified can, in many cases, lead to more effective participation by parents and other citizens in the support and guidance of the school. It can stimulate sound concern for the welfare of the school and its pupils and can lead to beneficial communication between the school staff and the community that staff serves.

6. When a "neighborhood school" becomes improperly exclusive in fact or in spirit, when it is viewed as being reserved for certain community groups, or when its effect is to create or continue a ghetto-type situation, it does not serve the purposes of democratic education.

From principle to policy

There are a number of ways in which these principles may be applied to correct *de facto* segregation in the large city. No one scheme is suitable for all communities and none offers a perfect solution anywhere, yet each has sufficient merit to serve as part of a larger pattern or as the first step of a long-term plan.

Open enrollment. This is a policy under which schools with available space are authorized to receive pupils transferred from other more crowded or otherwise less desirable units. The "receiving" school may be one with a better degree of "racial balance" than a more segregated "sending" school, or its enrollment may simply be smaller than its capacity. Open enrollment reduces congestion in "sending" schools, allows a wider choice to parents, and may improve the racial integration of the "receiving" school. To be fully effective it often requires transportation at public expense and, usually, special counseling for the children and the parents involved. Open enrollment is unlikely, however, to correct racial or cultural segregation in the "sending" schools, since the flow of pupils is always from a congested, imbalanced school toward a better favored one.

Pairing. This is sometimes called the "Princeton Plan," after the New Jersey town where it was first used. It is best suited to situations where one of two adjacent schools enrolls predominantly white pupils and the other predominantly Negro pupils. The two units are reorganized and the populations of both

buildings are treated as a single attendance area.

In the case of a K-6 elementary school, for example, the first three grades might be assigned to School A, while the three upper grades would attend School B. Separate kindergartens might be maintained, or the entire kindergarten program might be centered in School A.

The advantages are obvious. Both schools enroll pupils of both racial groups and are enabled to concentrate upon a narrower span of grades. The disadvantages include greater traveling distance for some children, the possible need for transportation, the alteration of established neighborhood patterns, and in some cases the reassignment of members of the two faculties.

Early evaluations suggest that the plan may be more appropriate for smaller communities, such as those with only two elementary schools. In larger cities greater flexibility of attendance areas may be obtained in other ways.

Zoning changes. This is the procedure by which school attendance areas are redesigned to take account of the racial composition of neighborhoods. Deliberate intent is to create in as many schools as possible student bodies including children of different racial or cultural backgrounds. In such reorganization it may be difficult to achieve at the same time a reasonable balance of population and equitable travel time for most pupils. In inner cities, however, where attendance areas are often quite compact, the two purposes are often easier to realize than they may be in outlying areas.

Educational complexes. This is the proposal under which a group of adjacent schools, including perhaps a junior high school and its feeder elementary units, or some other combination of three or more schools becomes, in effect, a small school system within a larger one. To be useful in correcting *de facto* segregation, the complex or cluster should include attendance areas of different racial composition. Within the cluster several types of adjustment become possible. Children might be assigned or reassigned among the units to effect better balanced enrollments. Teachers might be assigned to the various units in regular or rotating schedules.

Special activities that cannot be offered uniformly in all the schools might be centered in one or two of the buildings, and pupils transported from one to another for particular activities at appropriate times. Activities might be planned to bring together, for matters of common interest, the staff members or parents of the entire complex or parts of it.

The complex is especially suited to areas where housing patterns naturally produce segregated schools and where simple pairing might not be feasible. It combines the advantages of the neighborhood school with the benefits of membership in a larger community and correspondingly wider personal associations and program offerings.

Educational parks. The educational park is the boldest and most imaginative proposal yet offered for coping with the segregated urban community and its school problems. The park is, in essence, a scheme for concentrating all the schools of a section of the city, or in some cases of a whole city, upon a single large campus.

The plan applies to urban districts the principle, long accepted in rural areas, that when good schools cannot be provided close to a child's home, he should be transported to a site where an adequate program is possible. Thus in urban districts where suitable opportunities cannot be offered in existing schools, children would be transported to a central "consolidated school" and assigned to classes with other pupils from all parts of the city. Some advocates of the park plan would concentrate a whole school system in one large campus; some favor separate elementary and secondary centers; and others prefer several comprehensive parks strategically located about the periphery of the city.

In the inner city a "park" might consist of a single high-rise building, while in outlying areas the layout might resemble the scattered pattern of a typical academic campus. In whatever way the physical plant is constructed, it should provide for administrative units of such size and composition as to facilitate sound arrangements for pupil classification, effective teaching and guidance, and good relationships within the faculty. It is not necessary for any pupil to be lost because of the size of the park. Indeed, with good leadership and planning, a well-conceived educational park could result in more personalized attention to students than is now available in most ordinary schools.

Whether the total cost of an educational park is greater or less than the prevailing cost of separate sites and buildings depends on many factors, but there is no reason to assume that the cost of a single site for ten thousand pupils would necessarily be greater than the total for ten sites for one thousand pupils each. If a larger site can be obtained on relatively open land it would almost surely be less costly than equal acreage in a built-up area. Some operating economies may be anticipated, but the expense of transporting the pupils will be an added item. Against this and other increased outlays must be set the value of the better education that can be provided.

Whatever one's views may be about particular proposals for dealing with the problems of urban school segregation, there can be little doubt that the prevailing patterns of city school systems must be reexamined.

The schools that our present practices produce are too often divided into racial, cultural, and economic strata, with consequences that can only be viewed with apprehension. Unless the values of the common school can somehow be regained, the usefulness of the public school as an instrument for introducing the children of our cities to a genuinely open society will continue to diminish.

The most compelling reason for undertaking deliberately to integrate our schools is not, however, to extend charity to the Negro child by giving him the "advantage" of attending school with white classmates. The overriding need is to see that all children, of whatever race, may grow up knowing, understanding, and respecting people whose backgrounds differ from their own. The modern world is not only a multiracial world in the sense that men of many strains can now communicate and work with each other. It is also a world in which no race can choose to live alone. The option of isolationism is no longer open to any of us.

Communities composed of different racial groups have, then, a priceless means for improving the education of their children. Instead of looking upon a varied urban population as a problem we should view it rather as an educational asset and build our school programs to take every possible advantage of the opportunities it affords.

But whether we consider our urban school situations as priceless resources or perplexing dilemmas, we can be sure that the duties they impose rest squarely upon the shoulders of the school authorities.

The cumulative effect of the recent court decisions on questions of *de facto* segregation in large cities is to emphasize the residual responsibility of the board of education. The outcome of the New Rochelle, New York, case made it clear that when attendance-area boundaries create or maintain racial segregation they must be corrected. The Gary, Indiana, decision, on the other hand, stated that the school board is not necessarily obligated to correct *de facto* segregation which its policies have not caused. The case originating in the Brownsville Junior High School in New York City sustains the authority of the board of education to recognize racial imbalance as a problem and to remedy it.

From principle to practice

When parents in the community are hostile or resistant to measures for better integrated schools, then the school board, together with school administrators and teachers, must work patiently and painstakingly to educate them to the democratic purposes of public schools. When the board of education lags, then concerned groups like the PTA must educate their school boards as well as their members.

The whole thrust of recent cases is to place upon local school authorities the obligation to use their own judgment in making public education available to all on equal terms. At a time when many citizens deplore the growing trend away from localism in government it is good to know that some of the most important opportunities to lend reality to America's historic principles of liberty and equality can be found in our local communities and can be cultivated by local initiative.

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